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SUBJECT: SPECIAL TURKISH MEDIA REACTION: EU COMMISSION
REPORT,
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

EU door is open for Turkey - Turkiye
EU says 'Yes,' but no guarantees for membership - Aksam
Thanks to Verheugen - Sabah
EU Turkey representation: EU decision a historic moment -
Aksam
EU advises Ankara to consider Kurds a 'minority' - Aksam
EU Turkey report 'sensitive' on minorities - Hurriyet
Erdogan, Gul bargain with EU over 'minorities' - Milliyet
US: Turkey has the will to succeed - Hurriyet
European Parliament split over 'Yes' for Turkey - Aksam
Prodi: Turkey must get ready by 2013 - Sabah
Verheugen: The Turks deserve it - Turkiye
Verheugen: Turkey was quick, determined - Milliyet
Prodi: Turkey has reached European standards - Milliyet
PM Erdogan: Turkey determined to enter the EU - Turkiye
France cautious, Germany, Britain happy over EU decision -
Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

EU gives 'historic' green light for Turkey - Zaman
'Conditional' recommendation from EU Commission - Cumhuriyet
EU to present Turkey new 'homework' list - Cumhuriyet
Verheugen: Turkey has left us with no option but 'Yes' -
Radikal
Turkish government very pleased - Radikal
FM Gul: EU took historic step forward - Radikal
US, careful not to 'anger' EU, lobbies for Turkey -
Cumhuriyet
US Welcomes EU report on Turkey - Radikal
Blair: Negotiations with Turkey must begin without delay -
Yeni Safak
Verheugen: We can trust Turkey - Yeni Safak
EU to make final Turkey decision on December 17 - Zaman
Turkey gets visa for final test - Yeni Safak
Turkey to receive EU financial aid after 2006 - Zaman

BRIEFING

EU Commission report on Turkey: The EU Commission on
Wednesday recommended that the EU open accession talks with
Turkey. Turkey has achieved significant legislative
progress in many areas, the report said, adding that
'important progress has been made in the implementation of
political reforms, but these need to be further consolidated
and broadened.' The Turkish media highlighted the following
conclusions and recommendations contained in the Commission
report:

-- Political reforms have been introduced through a series
of constitutional and legislative changes adopted over a
period of three years (2001-2004).
-- Economic stability reliability have been substantially
improved since the 2001 economic crisis.

-- The government has increasingly asserted its control over
the military. Nevertheless, the armed forces in Turkey
continue to exercise influence through a series of informal
mechanisms.

-- The independence and efficiency of the judiciary have
been strengthened.

-- Turkey has acceded to most relevant international and
European conventions on human rights.
-- The situation of women remains unsatisfactory.
Discrimination and violence against women, including 'honor
killings,' remain a major problem. Children's rights have
been strengthened, but child labor remains an issue of

serious concern.

-- The authorities have adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy toward torture and a number of perpetrators have been punished. Torture is no longer systematic, but numerous cases of mistreatment, including torture, still occur and further efforts will be required to eradicate such practices.

-- Although freedom of religious belief is guaranteed by the Constitution, non-Muslim religious communities continue to experience difficulties.

The press reports that the accession talks will be 'open-ended' with no guarantee of a positive result. The Commission did not propose a starting date for negotiations, leaving the final decision to EU leaders at the December 17 summit. The Commission recommended a suspension of negotiations in the case of a serious and persistent breach of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Commission also made clear that Turkey would not join before 2015 at the earliest, and suggested that the bloc consider permanent measures that may restrict the free movement of workers.

Ankara hailed the European Commission's recommendation on Wednesday, but some Turks expressed concern that conditions attached by Brussels could block their road to membership. 'We find the EU Commission's assessment generally balanced,' PM Erdogan told a news conference in Strasbourg. 'Our desire is for talks to begin officially in the first few months of 2005.' FM Abdullah Gul, speaking in Ankara, said: 'This is an historic decision, both for Turkey and for Europe.' Initial reaction from the business world, which hopes the decision will attract more foreign investment, was positive. While most commentaries focused on the positive aspects of the report, Murat Yetkin of "Radikal" highlighted what he believes are 'double standards' with regard to the free movement of labor and agricultural issues. "Hurriyet" Ankara bureau chief Sedat Ergin cautioned that Ankara would not be pleased by the Commission report's language concerning ethnic and religious minorities. Ergin also commented that some in the military would be uncomfortable with the implication that the military's role should be further proscribed.

Many commentators expressed concern that the accession negotiations will be an open-ended process, and that talks could be halted in the event of a serious violation of freedoms and human rights. Papers note that the EU Commission, through a new Accession Partnership Document to be presented to Turkey in 2005, will outline new 'expectations' from Ankara before full admission. The media expect the EU to step up pressure on Ankara to recognize the Republic of Cyprus. Papers also highlight that the Commission report described both Kurds and Alevis in Turkey as 'minorities.' EU Commission representative in Ankara, Hans Jorg Kretschmer, said on Wednesday that the EU expects more to be done with regard to education and broadcast in mother tongues. PM Erdogan told the press in Strasbourg that Turkey would continue to curb torture, and pledged to expand religious freedoms. Meanwhile, Dutch FM Bernard Bot, the EU term president, said he expects EU negotiations with Turkey to start in the second half of 2005. Bot stressed that Turkey can join the EU if it meets all required political, economic, and social conditions, but noted that 'there is no certainty about EU entry.' A news commentary in "Cumhuriyet" applauds Washington's 'sophisticated' lobbying activities for supporting Ankara's EU bid. Diplomatic sources told "Cumhuriyet" that President Bush, Secretary Powell, and National Security Adviser Dr. Rice

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have contacted high-level EU officials in support of Turkey's case.

EDITORIAL OPINION: EU-Turkey

"Congratulations!"
Hadi Uluengin wrote from Brussels in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (10/7): "The next 70 days are significantly important for Turkey's EU vision. Barring some kind of 'train wreck,' December 17 will be the day that Ankara will learn it can start accession negotiations in early 2005. There is no need quibble about the negative aspects of the EU commission report. The fact is that Turkey managed to overcome the first hurdle, and we all have to look on the bright side. Turkey should focus on successfully overcoming the next hurdle on December 17."

"Conditions in the Report"
Sami Kohen noted in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (10/7): "There is a discriminatory approach in the report, especially on the issue of the free circulation of labor. Preventive measures on this issue are expressed in such a

way that they could be permanent, a practice never applied to any other EU candidate. Such a condition might be a relief to the European public, but will certainly create uneasiness for Turks. . The report also says that `the outcome of negotiations cannot be guaranteed.' This is another statement that will cause concerns in Turkey. . There is still a chance to eliminate those conditions or make them ineffective. It remains to be seen if EU leaders will take steps in this regard, or whether they will make the conditions even heavier. All of this calls for some very hard work by Turkish diplomacy."

"A Revolutionary Process"

Ergun Babahan commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (10/7): "This is a very important step, which has paved the way for the start of negotiations. Once the negotiations process is started with the EU, we are all going to witness a Turkey that is rapidly changing for the better. The result will be a democratic country with greater prosperity and contemporary values. We are going to see a revolutionary process of democratic change."

"The EU Report and Sarkozy"

Fikret Ertan wrote in the Islamist-intellectual "Zaman" (10/7): "The Commission report is not a surprise. Turkey completed the necessary reforms and has become eligible for the start of negotiations. This is an important decision, but one that should not be exaggerated. In fact, Turkey should focus on the next step, which will be more determinative and faces larger obstacles. One of the biggest hurdles is the ongoing referendum debate led by France. The Turkish public should get to know the important French political figure who initiated the whole referendum controversy -- French Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who aspires to be President of France."

"It is still a long and thorny path"

Fehmi Kuru wrote in the Islamist-opinion maker "Yeni Safak" (10/7): "The report contains some skillful diplomatic language. The EU Commission managed to address all of the various strains of thought in the Union. The upcoming process and the December 17 summit are the most important benchmarks for success. Turkey should shape its vision to be able to make the best gains out of the summit. The required steps for the success should be taken as soon as possible. . Turkey is aware of the fact that EU membership process is a long and thorny path. There have been some significant gains since the day Turkey officially applied to be a member, but even today the road is still long and rocky."

"EU Report and Illusions"

Orhan Karatas argued in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (10/7): "EU officials are revealing their real intentions only on non-official occasions, during which they reflect the anti-Turkish sentiment within the Union. In other words, EU officials are warning Turkey to be prepared for the possibility that it will never be admitted as a full member. Some members are even arguing about whether or not Turkey should be given a negotiation date. France is one of many examples, and we can add Holland, Belgium, Greece and the Greek Cypriots to the list. Who can really believe that we will convince them all and be admitted to the EU? To believe this is to live under an illusion. . Let's be honest: this is just a report issued by the EU Commission, and does not represent a binding decision. After making such important sacrifices, what Turkey has gotten is a report that is full of conditions. This is an indication of how Turkey will be treated in the decision process on December 17."

EDELMAN